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X-MEN

DIE-BY-THE-SWORD

MARVEL
LIMITED SERIES
3 of 5

CLAREMONT
SANTACRUZ
CAFU

RATED A



\$2.99 US \$3.05 CAN

DIRECT EDITION

new EXCALIBUR

protectors of the British Isles...



CAPTAIN BRITAIN



PETE WISDOM



SAGE



DAZZLER



NOCTURNE

EXILES

protectors of the OmniVerse...



BLINK



SABRETOOTH



MORPH



PSYLOCKE



LONGSHOT



SHADOWCAT



MYSTIQUE



ROGUE



THUNDERBIRD

...vs. this disparate collection of ne'er-do-wells:



MERLYN



JASPERS



THE FURY



ROUGE-MORT

Previously...

Having just rescued their homeland from an invading force led by *Albion*, *Excalibur* is attacked by mysterious assassin *Rogue-Mort* and her *Janissaries*. Taken by surprise, *Brian Braddock* (*Captain Britain*) is gravely wounded. To save his life, his sister *Betsy* (*Psylocke*) orders a desperate withdrawal to the *Exiles'* base of operations, the *Crystal Palace*, where the two teams tend their wounds and make each other's acquaintance. The joyous reunion of *Thunderbird* and *Nocturne* follows, as does the not so joyous one between *Dazzler* and *Longshot* (who's lost all memory of this woman who was once his bride). Their pleasantries are interrupted when the teams discover that an attack is in progress by *James Jaspers* and a pair of *Furies* against the headquarters of the *Captain Britain* corps...

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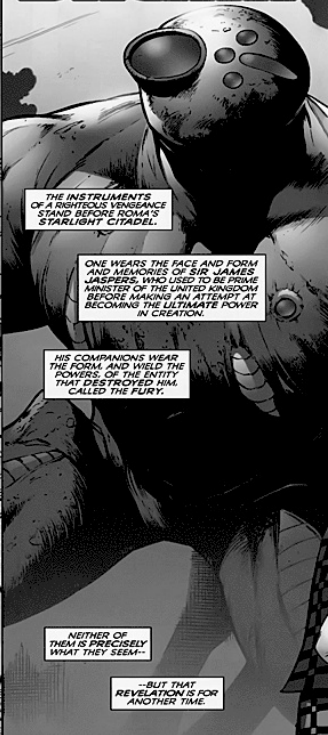


THIS IS ROMA.

BY ANY HUMAN
STANDARD, SHE'D
BE CONSIDERED A
GODDESS.

FOR AS LONG AS ANYONE
CAN REMEMBER, SHE'S BORNE
A MEASURE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR
THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF
THE OMNIVERSE--NOT SIMPLY
THE WORLDS AND CIVILIZATIONS
OF A SINGLE UNIVERSE, BUT
OF THEM ALL.

When Falls a DREAM



THE INSTRUMENTS
OF A RIGHTEOUS VENGEANCE
STAND BEFORE ROMA'S
STARLIGHT CITADEL.

ONE WEARS THE FACE AND FORM
AND MEMORIES OF SIR JAMES
JASPERS, WHO USED TO BE PRIME
MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM
BEFORE MAKING AN ATTEMPT AT
BECOMING THE ULTIMATE POWER
IN CREATION.

HIS COMPANIONS WEAR
THE FORM, AND WIELD THE
POWERS, OF THE ENTITY
THAT DESTROYED HIM,
CALLED THE FURY.

NEITHER OF
THEM IS PRECISELY
WHAT THEY SEEM--

--BUT THAT
REVELATION IS FOR
ANOTHER TIME.

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THIS IS ROMA'S
FATHER, WHO
CALLS HIMSELF
MERLYN.

HE HELD HER POSITION
BEFORE HER, UNTIL IT
APPARENTLY DROVE
HIM MAD.



HE DIDN'T TAKE KINDLY TO BEING DEPOSED.
NOW, IT APPEARS, HE'S RETURNED TO TAKE
BACK ALL HE BELIEVES WAS STOLEN FROM HIM,
AND IS THE ORIGINATOR OF THE VENGEANCE
AT HIS REBELLIOUS AND UNGRATEFUL
OFFSPRING'S DOOR.

SUFFICE IT TO
SAY FOR NOW
THAT THE PLAYERS
ARE ALL TAKING
THE STAGE...

...THE BATTLE
IS ABOUT TO
BEGIN.

AT STAKE--
WELL, THE FATE
OF PRETTY MUCH
EVERYTHING.

I THOUGHT
WE WERE *DONE*
WITH THEM. THEY
SHOULD BOTH BE
DEAD!

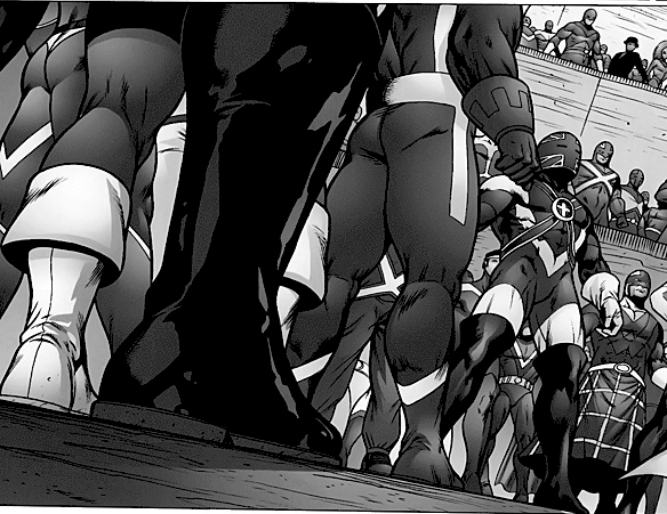
EVIL THAT
PRIMAL DOES NOT DIE.
SATURNYNE.

THAT'S
WHY WE NEED
HEROES.

THE
CAPTAIN-CORPS
IS NOTHING BUT
HEROES--

--YET
ROMA SOUNDS
ALMOST LOST.

SHE'S BEEN
THIS WAY EVER
SINCE WE LOST
OUR LINK WITH
BRADDOCK.





WHAT MAKES HIM SO IMPORTANT? THE CORPS EXISTED FOR GENERATIONS BEFORE HE CAME ALONG.

I HAVE TO ADMIT, THOUGH, I'D FEEL BETTER IF HE WERE BY OUR SIDE.



BY ALL THE UNLOVING GODS, NOW SHE'S GOT ME DOING IT!

I DO NOT NEED HIM. I AM ORAL-LUNA SATURNYNE.

WHATEVER COMES MY WAY, WHATEVER OBSTACLES OR THREATS I FACE...

I WILL FIND A WAY TO WIN!



THE CORPS IS ASSEMBLED, SATURNYNE.

ARE YOU AFRAID, MACGUILLAN?



I'M NOT THAT BIG A FOOL, OR GOOD A LIAR, TO TELL YOU DIFFERENT.

IT TOOK A MIRACLE TO BEAT THE FURY LAST TIME.

BUT ARE NOT MIRACLES WHAT WE DO BEST?

LET'S HOPE SO, JUSTICER BULL.

MY CAPTAINS--ONCE MORE THE OMNIVERSE STANDS IN NEED OF YOUR SALVATION.

WE HAVE FACED THIS PARTICULAR THREAT BEFORE, AND THOUGH BLOODIED, WE HAVE PREVAILED.

THIS DAY WILL PROVE NO DIFFERENT.

LET JUSTICE AND HONOR PREVAIL--

--FOR YOU FIGHT TODAY TO SAFEGUARD THE FUTURE!

AND SO...THE BATTLE COMMENCES...

FOR ROMA!

NOW THAT IS WHAT ONE CALLS IMPRESSIVE!

DOES 'EM PROUD, THOSE HEROES. THEY'RE A CREDIT TO THEIR CORPS.

NOT THAT THIS'LL MAKE THE SLIGHTEST BIT OF DIFFERENCE...

...IN HOW THIS ALL WILL END!

BOOM!

HAMMER HIM, LADS.

DON'T GIVE HIM A MOMENT'S RESPITE.

THE FURY'S HALLMARK IS RAW POWER.

NO CREATIVE INTELLIGENCE. LESS GRACE. THAT'S OUR KEY ADVANTAGE.

WE HAVE TO USE OUR SPEED AND AGILITY TO KEEP HAMMERING THEM UNTIL THEY DROP!

GOOD PLAN.

CAPTAIN UK IS A SUPERB LEADER.

LET'S HOPE THE FATES ARE SAILING ON US ALL.



SADLY, THOUGH—
FOR ALL THEIR
STRENGTH, FOR ALL
THEIR COURAGE—

--THE
CAPTAINS ARE
THE ONES WHO
FALL.



YET DESPITE THE
FEARSOME COST,
THEY PERSIST IN
THEIR FEROCIOUS
ASSAULT.



LED BY JUSTICER
BULL, THEY REFUSE
TO YIELD.



IF NECESSARY,
SACRIFICING THEIR
OWN LIVES TO HELP
A COMRADE.



IT'S NO
MORE THAN A
MOMENTARY
SALVATION--

--BUT SOMETIMES,
THAT MOMENT IS
ALL THE TIME A
HERO NEEDS.



IT'S A
NATURAL RESPONSE.
A DECENT HOPE...

...THAT SADLY
ONLY LASTS BUT
A MOMENT.

C'MON
NOW, LADS...

--DID YOU
REALLY THINK IT
WAS GOING TO BE
THIS EASY?

YOU'RE
VERY GOOD.
MY DEAR.

IN FACT,
AS I RECALL,
YOU'RE THE ONE
WHO DESTROYED
ME, LO THOSE
MANY MONTHS
AGO, WHAT?

NO,
THAT'S--
NOT QUITE
RIGHT.

THE FURY
DESTROYED
ME.

YOU
DESTROYED
THE FURY!

AND
NOW WE'RE ALL
THREE OF US
TOGETHER
AGAIN.

IT'S A
PART OF ME,
AND WITH THIS
KISS...

...YOU
WILL BE,
TOO!



THOU WILT
DO NOTHING,
HORROR!

THY REIGN
OF TERROR IS
AT AN END.

LORD
GOLDSTAR,
RESCUE OUR
LADY!

YOU'RE FREE,
MACQUILLAN!

HAVE
YOU HEROES NO
CONCEPT OF
MANNERS?

HOW DARE YOU
INTERRUPT A PRIVATE
CONVERSATION?



THAT WAS
NOT VERY NICE.
WHAT YOU LOT
JUST DID.

SPOILED
MY MOMENT, Y'DID.
YOU TOOK AWAY
MY WIN--

--NOT
T'MENTION,
MY GIRL.

DON'T DO
IT AGAIN, YOU
WRETCHED
CREATURES...

...OR
I'LL BE REALLY
AND TRULY
CROSS.

NOW,
GO MAKE
YOURSELVES
USEFUL.

I DO SO
LOVE IT WHEN I
GET TO UNLEASH
SUCH PROPER
MAYHEM.

AND THE
MORE I DO IT,
THE EASIER IT
GETS!



ENOUGH!

ROMA,
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING?

WHAT I
SHOULD HAVE
DONE AT THE
START.



I'M
DONE FOLLOWING
MY FATHER'S LEAD, AND
LETTING OTHERS FIGHT
IN MY PLACE.

YOU'RE
NOT DOING
THIS.



DO YOU
TRULY THINK YOU
CAN STOP ME,
SATURNYNE?

WHAT I
WANT IS FOR
YOU TO
THINK--



--NOT
ABOUT JASPERS BUT
WHY HE'S HERE? WHO
ULTIMATELY BENEFITS
FROM THIS
CONFLICT?

DON'T
MISTAKE THIS FOR THE
REAL BATTLE. ROMA,
JASPERS IS BUT THE
PRELUDE.



TRUST ME
IN THIS. I MAY NOT
BE ON YOUR LEVEL
WHEN IT COMES TO
RUNNING THE
COSMOS...

...BUT I KNOW
TACTICS.



THE
CAPTAINS AND
I WILL DO WHAT
WE CAN TO KEEP
JASPERS AT
BAY.

YOU NEED
TO PREPARE
YOURSELF FOR
THE MAIN
EVENT.

MEANWHILE...

...BACK AT THE
CRYSTAL PALACE...





EACH SUCCESSOR TO THIS PLACE, TO THE ROLE WE PLAY IN THE SCHEME OF THINGS...

...HAS TO LEARN TO RECOGNIZE THEIR INSTINCTS.

AND TO TRUST THEM.

SEE? SHE'S DISCOVERED EARTH-2532. ON THAT WORLD, THERE ARE NO "X-MEN."

DIFFERENT LOOKS PERHAPS, BUT NO SUPER-POWERS.

DOESN'T MEAN THERE ARE NO HEROES. JUST THAT THEY SERVE HUMANITY IN OTHER WAYS.



PLEASE DON'T BE SCARED.

MY NAME'S CAT. I'M FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION.

I'LL EXPLAIN AS WE GO. I KNOW IT SOUNDS CRAZY, BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP.



TOLD'JA SO.

JUST GIVE THE CHILD HALF A CHANCE, SHE'LL FIGURE THINGS OUT JUST FINE.

PART OF ME WOULD LOVE TO STAY AND HELP...

...JUST LIKE THERE'S PART OF ME THAT'S SCARED AS CAN BE TO GO.



BUT OUR TIME IS OVER, MY LOVE.



LIKE IT OR NOT, WE HAVE TO LET THIS NEXT GENERATION PROVE THEIR WORTH--



"--AS MUCH TO THEMSELVES AS TO EVERYONE AROUND THEM."

PRYDE HAS GOOD INSTINCTS, AND SHE *TRUSTS* THEM.

THE DOCTORS ARE DOING THEIR BEST BUT NOTHING'S *CERTAIN* YET.

WHAT ABOUT US?



I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I JUST TOLD *SAGE*. THIS IDEA IS BLOODY *MAD*.

DESPERATE TIMES, RADICAL SOLUTIONS. JASPERS IS *WINNING*--

--AND INSTINCT TELLS ME THIS IS JUST THE *TIP* OF THE ICEBERG.

WE'VE YET TO SEE WHO SET THESE EVENTS IN *MOTION*.

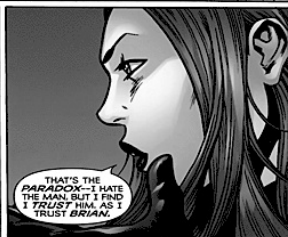


BUT YOU HAVE A *SUSPICION*.

I'M BASICALLY FOLLOWING *BRIAN*'S LEAD.

YOU *REALLY* WANT THIS, BETS? D'YOU *REALLY* TRUST *ALBION*?

I *DON'T* WANT THIS. WISDOM. I JUST DON'T SEE ANY OTHER WAY.



THAT'S THE *PARADOX*--I HATE THE MAN, BUT I FIND I *TRUST* HIM. AS I TRUST *BRIAN*.



HE ISN'T *EVIL*. WISDOM. YOU SAID SO YOURSELF.

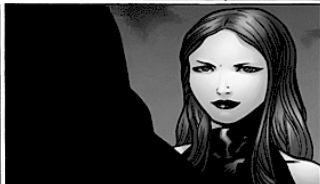
NEITHER ARE YOU, PETAL. SUPPOSEDLY. AND SEE WHAT YOU DID?



WRONG ANALOGY. DON'T THINK OF *SAGE*, CONSIDER *LIONHEART*.

HER INSTINCTS ARE NEARLY AS GOOD AS *BRIAN*'S.

IF *ALBION* WAS *EVIL*, SHE'D *NEVER* HAVE FOLLOWED HIM.





BACK AT
THE BATTLE--

--THE MORE JAMES
JASPERS SEEMS TO
BE WINNING--

BYAHHH!

--THE LESS HE
SEEMS TO BE HAVING
ANY REAL FUN.



CHALK!
WHAT'S THAT
SOUND?

ZARA
BOOM



THAT
WOULD BE ME,
MONSTER--



--FIRING MY
GUN!



**DIE,
YOU WRETCHED
ABOMINATION.**

**YOU'VE
BROUGHT ENOUGH
GRIEF TO THE TOTALITY.
SO DO US ALL A
FAVOR--**

**--AND
DIE!**



SATURNYNE,
LOOK OUT!

IF
THERE'S ANOTHER
THREAT, *DEAL*
WITH IT.

I
WON'T STOP 'TIL
JASPERS IS
DONE!



OH,
BLOODY
HELL!



I DIDN'T
REALIZE HE'D
CREATED SO
MANY!

THE JASPERS
HAS BEEN A
VERY *BUSY*
MAN.



THAT...

...THE
ABOMINATION...

...MUST BE
STOPPED!

YET
ANOTHER
REASON
THEN...





OH, I SAY--

--THIS DOESN'T SEEM AT ALL RIGHT.

WHY ISN'T THE OLD BRAIN NOT QUITE WORKING RIGHT?

MARK MY WORDS, WHEN I SET THINGS RIGHT...

...WHOEVER'S RESPONSIBLE WILL BE TRULY SORRY.

YOU THREATEN MY LITTLE LADY FRIEND, BUB--

YOU ANSWER TO ME.

AND ME.

AND ME--

--HEROES HERE TO SAVE THE DAY!



FOR CLARICE FERGUSON, THESE MOMENTS TAKE HER BACK TO THE DAYS SHE SPENT BY SABRETOOTH'S SIDE, ON AN EARTH SWEEPED BY WAR.

IN THAT PLACE, IN THOSE DARK DAYS, THE REALITY OF LIFE WAS KILL OR BE KILLED.



TO SIMPLY SURVIVE IN THAT AWFUL PLACE...

...NO ONE COULD HAVE A BETTER TEACHER THAN SABRETOOTH.



THUNDERBIRD WAS SHAPED BY THE APOCALYPSE OF A DIFFERENT DIMENSION, BUT WHO WAS NO LESS CRUEL A CREATURE.

PHYSICALLY, HE CAN NEVER RETURN TO THE FACE AND BODY HE WAS BORN WITH.

BUT IN A VERY PRIMAL WAY, THIS MERCILESS EXERCISE OF RAW POWER IS HIS WAY OF COMING TO TERMS WITH THE AWFULNESS OF WHAT WAS...

...AND THE TRANSCENDENT HOPE OF WHAT MIGHT YET BE.



MORPH HAS NO NIGHTMARE MEMORIES TO DRIVE HIM--

--NONE AT LEAST THAT ARE HIS.

BUT AS HE TEARS INTO JASPER'S WITH A FEROCITY THAT'S TOTALLY UNLIKE HIM...

...HE CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER WHERE IT CAME FROM...

...WHAT IT MEANS...

...AND WHY DEEP DOWN INSIDE, IT FEELS SO GOOD.



AS THE EXILES INCREASE
THE FEROCITY OF THEIR
ATTACK, JASPERS
BEGINS TO FALTER...

ARE WE--
WINNING?

I'LL
BELIEVE IT WHEN THE
MONSTER IS LESS
THAN DUST.

GATHER
WHAT'S LEFT
OF THE
CORPS.

...AND WITH HIM,
THE RAGE--THE VERY
LIFE-FORCE OF
THE CREATURES HE
CREATED.



THIS IS JUST THE
BEGINNING.



MY LADY,
THE DAY IS
OURS!

SAY THAT
WHEN JASPERS IS
NO MORE THAN A
MEMORY...

...PERHAPS THEN
I'LL BELIEVE IT.



MY LADY!
BEWARE--

YAGKH!!



I AM
ROUSE-
MORT.

YOU ARE
ROMA.

I AM TO
BRING YOU
TO YOUR
FATHER.



YOU
WANT THE LADY:
ARMOR-
GIRL....

...YOU'D
BETTER BE PREPARED
TO GO THROUGH
ME.



TO BE
CONTINUED!

Megan



Scans by Dizzy

THE MINUTEMEN